

Poems for Planting Love

Poems by physically and visually impaired children attending schools run by the Sisters of Charity of Seton Hill in Gwangju and Chungju (Korea) translated by Brother Anthony of Taizé.

These poems are printed each year in the program of the fund-raising dinner organized by the members of 'Planting Love.'

HOPE

6

Kim Ok-yeon

Eun Hae School, 6th Grade

In the picture
I am standing
but outside the picture
I am always sitting down.

가

In the picture
I am eating something
with my hands
but outside the picture
my hands are useless.

In the picture
my hands and my feet are separate
but outside the picture
my feet are my hands.

가

But, but,
I do believe
someday
I shall become
what I am in the picture.

PRAYER

5

Lee Mi-Jeong
St. Mary School, 5th Grade

May God bless this new morning
as the little kids
who last night
in their dreams
went to their mother's breast
gently
awake like the little birds in their nests
in the oak tree

가
가

His elder brother loves Hun-i,
Seona loves her elder sister
so up on the hill we smile
bright as sunlight
chirrup like sparrows
as we gossip
and though we can't see the world
we live happily
so give us strength

가

Slowly, slowly,
the sun has made its daytime journey
and now makes a lovely sunset.
Now we recall things we were unhappy at
things we were not grateful for
as we lived this night-dark day,
so grant us rest
in this silence.
May this night be peace
peace for us.

MOTHER

4

Park Hyeoun-jin

St. Mary School, Chongju, 4th Grade

가

가

Every year

As I get a bit bigger,
and mother gets a bit smaller,
her soft hands
grow a bit rougher,
her lovely face
gets a bit more lined.

Day by day

as mother
devoted to her blind daughter
walks up the hill back home,
the sun on her back,
she pants a bit more.

MOTHER'S FACE

6

Jang Su-man
Eunhye School, 6th Grade

Mother has medals
on her face.

Medal No. 1:
her gentle smile
when she looks at dad.

가

Medal No. 2:
her deep-set dimples
when she sees sister doing the dishes.

Medal No. 3:
her crescent-moon eyes
as little brother gives her a massage.

가

Medal No. 4:
the waves of wrinkles that form
when I refuse to do my therapy.

가

Mother has the most precious medals
in all the world
on her face.

TOMORROW

2

Jo Jae-han

Eunhye School, Middle School, 2nd year

가

I may be handicapped
but there is a tomorrow filled with happiness.
A scientist devoted to mankind
is what I want to be.

I may have a speech barrier
but there is a tomorrow filled with hope.
A world famous interpreter
is what I want to be.

가

Although I can't walk
I have a dream.
A marathon runner
eager to run
across green mountains
over green fields
down straight asphalt roads
that's what I want to be.

가

And now I am heading
toward tomorrow
embracing
these joy-filled dreams.

3

DEAR TREE

Kim Jeong-hun

St. Mary School, Chongju, 3th Grade

Dear tree,
it must be very boring
standing there
with both arms
stretched toward the sky,
always in the same place.

Dear tree,
yet you're wonderful
wearing beautiful clothes in every season
and giving us
such pretty flowers and fruit.

Dear tree,
it's boring for me too, since I can't see
yet
when I grow up,
I plan to do wonderful things
just like you.

가

3

“ , !”

“ .”

“ , .”

“ , .”

?

CLOUDS

Hyun-hee Jung
Eunhye School, 3rd grade

Mum
looks at the clouds.
“Oh, how lovely,” she cries,
struck with a young girl’s wonder.

Whereupon dad growls,
“Clouds are always like that,”
gruff as a surly boy.

My cute little sister exclaims,
“The sky is so strange:
it’s moving all over the place.”

Whereupon I reply,
cute as pie,
“I want some candyfloss.”

How can all the family
think so differently?

MUM'S GARDEN

6

Pak Hyeon-jin
St. Mary School, 6th Grade

가

When joy fills
my heart with smiles,
flowers bloom
in mum's garden.

가

When sorrow clouds
my heart with tears,
rain falls
in mum's garden.

가

가

When hurt wrings
my heart with sighs,
the wind blows
in mum's garden.

가

Mum's heart
is a garden of love:
mine to ensure
it only has flowers.

SPRING

4

Gang Seong-seon
St. Mary School, 4th grade

가 가

Every lane
is filled with
the shouts of children:
the sun
has called
the children out.

가 가

Every village
is filled with
the fragrance of flowers:
the wind
has puffed
flower fragrance about.

MY STAIRWAY

1

Su-young Jang

Eunhye School, High School, 1st year

One step,
two steps,
up I go
till I see myself.

Three steps,
four steps,
on I go
I am ashamed of the self I see.

가

From the top
I look back: I see
I have a terribly contorted face.

Whereupon
I say:
I can do it:
I must be strong!

GRANDMA ON THE PHONE

2

Yun Ji-hong

Eunhye School, Middle School, 2nd year

“ , ”

“Hello, Grandma”

“ , !

“Well, you little puppy!

?”

Why are you so late phoning?”

“ 가

“I’ve been waiting,

,

waiting so long!

,

Suppose, little puppy.

?”

suppose I were to die?”

I couldn’t speak

hearing grandma crying on the phone:

when she’d hung up. I still held the phone.

but couldn’t tell her what I wanted to say:

“ ...”

“Grandma, I hope you live for a very long time.”

HOW MUCH LONGER?

1

Bak Hyeon-jin

St. Mary School, Middle School, 1st year

How much longer will I be able to see
my dearest mummy
my dearest daddy?

How much longer will I be able to see
my dearest friends
my teachers?

How much longer will I be able to see
the kind sun
the big-hearted sky?

Sea and sky
friends and parents
even myself before the mirror:
they all keep avoiding me,
running further and further away

가

When I try to run after, to catch them up
they run away, as if they don't like me

I don't know what to say
to all the things here
round about me . . .

...

가

SEEING THE SKY

1

Hyeong Se-jin
St. Mary School, High School 1st year

가

가

As a child sometimes I used to count the buses
speeding past as I waited for mother.
Beautiful river banks,
amusing games, the beautiful sky,
nothing could ever make me forget my mother.
I wonder.. perhaps
that vague sense of expectancy
came from mother's concern for me.

가

가

가

Then when I met her,
though I used to feel a lump in my throat,
I was simply happy.
Without words
just holding hands
I could sense mother's heart,
mother smiling like a peony
as I looked back from my tricycle
as I looked up after running.

가

When the time came to part
I could not say a word
but went dashing madly
along the path she had taken.

가

In my fading sight loomed
the faint horizon.
Instead of mother I saw
the crimson glow of sunset.
That faint memory from when I was five:
the sky glimpsed for the very last time.

The way it grew ever more remote.

Yi Ho-Geon Eunhye School

After the operation
 the dressings were removed with hope
 but they could not bring the sky back.
 She hugged me as we wept and wept
 but the sky did not come in
 through the open window.

Here we're in the arms of the Virgin Mary
 with our hearts that suffered so
 as we went dashing in all directions.
 Leaving me in the playground
 she can't budge an inch, I know;
 I can sense my mother behind me
 lingering outside the school gate
 so I begin to write in Braille and to type,
 to calm my longing to see.

Mother's face
 that I cannot see, no matter how I try.
 I long to tell her how grateful I am . . .

Every time I think of your face
 the sky
 comes to mind
 and the sunset,

But mother,
 don't feel sad.
 The sky I see
 is your face

"How my boy has grown!"
 Mother's voice
 gently stroking my back.
 My familiar sky.

3

가

Father

Kim Jae-mi

Eunhye School, High School 3rd year

Before I was born, my father
dreamed of holding me like a plump peach.
Only I
as if my life had been cursed
was wrapped up like a stony seed
unable to put out shoots easily.
Eager to transform this seed
unfeeling as a winter hillside, this dry waste,
into the reality of peach blossom and a pearly
peach
he watered me with tears in the red earth
with his mud-stained working trousers,
his hoe and shovel worn down to the handle.
Father,
even if no one visits me, perhaps
thanks to your tears my husk will open,
buds and flowers will flourish in the open field
then I'll come home
again.

The love you dreamed of.

SUNSET GLOW

1

Bak Hyeon-jin

St. Mary School, High School 1st year

God

A few days ago I heard sunset glow.

'Lovely'

'Really lovely'

they said,

eager to give me a sense of the sunset glow.

They did their utmost to describe it.

It was not easy.

It took so long

to make the picture

that it was already past.

It was very small and vague.

Perhaps

?

they lacked the proper colors?

God.

All the same,

I want to say thank you.

For placing

even this little

가

weak sunset glow

deep down in my heart.

HUG ME TENDERLY, MA AND PA

1

Yi Hye-won

Eunhye School, Middle School 1st year

Until it was time to leave sun and moon
I used to clap, enjoying TV with my Ma,
while the boy from the house next door
was having fun playing soccer and tag in the
street.

?

가

I wonder what was the matter?
I felt resentful and jealous of him.
Perhaps I was bored with the TV
that never answered back or hid a mistake?

While resentment and jealousy were piling high,
at the sight of my wheel chair
tears would gather in Ma's eyes,
many times tears would gather.

Carried in on Ma's back,
I met friends in a little classroom,
their faces all crooked, bodies twisted;
after adjusting the wheel chair
Ma turned her back again.

가

가

가

!

Spring passed, and when summer rain fell
it seemed my heart was full of peach blossoms.
My friends Sparrow, Baby Bear, Hedgehog,
running across the grass, playing ball in the hall,
call my name: Hey, Hye-won!

Tomorrow I'll boast of my friends to Ma.
The next day I'll lovingly boast to Dad.

Then Ma and Pa will hug me tenderly.

GOD'S WIND

2

Son Seul-gi

St. Mary School, 2th grade

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The wind's blowing

I'm feeling good.

It's as if I'm about to sprout wings
and go flying off.

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. .
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.

Now the wind's not blowing.

My brow is damp with sweat.

The wind has got tangled up in the wind
and is not blowing now.

.

God, with your mighty hand

set free the tangled wind.

Let the wind blow cool.

MOTHER

2

Kim Hui-jin

St. Mary School, Middle School 2nd year

가

Mother is a sorrowful goldfish
trapped by the fence of life,
a goldfish in a bowl,
unable to get out and go anywhere.

I'm a shark to mother,
a troublesome shark
always causing her distress.

가

The only things I have ever given mother
are tears and sighs.

가

Now I'll give mother
a seed of happiness,
in the hope that some time
later that seed will blossom
as a beautiful rose . . .

...

MOTHER'S BACK

3

Cho Hui-jeong

Eunhye School, High School 3rd year

Up the steep hill
on the way home from school,
mother's back
is soaked again today.

가

...'

'You'd better wrap both arms
tight around my neck
while I'm carrying you . . .'
but my right hand, disobedient,
dangles freely.

가

I try not to hear,
I want not to hear
how the sound of mother's breathing
grows louder and louder
while my grateful, sorry heart
never slips from mother's back.

가

On the painful way home from school.

A DREAM OF TWO WHEELS

1

Bak Hwi-gi

Eunhye School, High School 1st year

My body shakes with every step I take
but once I'm one with you, if I turn my two
wheels

I can go anywhere in the world.

가

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가

When I miss my home by the sea at Haenam
if I turn the two wheels of my wheelchair
toward a window facing south, I'm happy.

(Bocia)

When I play Bocia with you, if I turn
my two wheels toward the red, blue, and white
balls,

a fighting voice can be heard.

가

As I sink into sweet dreams with you

I keep spinning the two wheels

that carry my body and heart into a garden of
dreams.

I KNOW

4

Gwon Yu-jin

St. Mary School, 4th grade

I see through my ears
mother's brightly smiling face.
And I know, yes, I know through my ears
our teacher's angry face.

가

I can see through my hands
my little brother's pretty face.
And I know, yes, I know through my hands
What a lovely birthday present my sister has
given me.

가

가

I can see through my nose
the tasty stew mother has prepared.
And I know, yes, I know through my nose
what's for supper this evening.

가

I can see with my whole body
how big the trees at our school are.
And I know, yes, I know by embracing them
that the world contains many beautiful things.

가

, ,

Sometimes I hate my eyes that hurt me,
but I learned, yes, I learned from my eyes
that I have precious friends
in ears, nose and hands.

...

2

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가 ...

WHAT SEEDS TAUGHT ME

Kim Myong-ok

St. Mary School, High School 2nd year

As I sowed seeds

I learned the excitement of wondering
what they would look like as they grew up.

They would not sprout if left too dry
so I learned what anxiety was
and as I watered their roots
I learned how to be devoted.

When the first baby shoots emerged
I sensed what joy was like
then seeing them safely grow
I learned about happiness.

On the day they gave me their present of
flowers
I learned gratitude
then when they left seeds
and returned to the ground again..

I learned
expectancy
and blessings.

BLUE SKY

3

Shin Hui-gyu
Eunhye School, High School 3rd year

Out following the grasshoppers,
I had to play and keep playing alone
and the blue sky I gazed up at with my little eyes
always filled my heart.

가

I built sandcastles and pulled them down,
then in the glow of dusk,
on the way back, my heels
tucked into mother's breast, I slept.

I was wrapped in slightly different thoughts
and interests
and only learned later that difference is the color
called "handicap."

가

My family
my friends
my teachers
developed my freedom

so now I can be happy on account of their warm
love.

By a special destiny that brought me to this
school,

I found a new me.

With my ready smile, grasshoppers and
dandelion puff filling my pockets,
my age tells me I must go out into the unknown
world.

가

가

I must speed off on a bicycle, between wheat
fields
and May's blue sky, bearing my dreams.

가

A HEART PLANTING FLOWER SEEDS

1

Yu Yeon-cheol

Eunhye School, Middle School 1st year

When we plant flower seeds, we plant them very carefully.

Covering them gently with fine soil, pouring on water

to keep them from drying, I plant my little dream there too.

?

How high will they grow before they blossom brightly?

Bathing in cheery sunlight, as fragrant breezes wrap them round

soon I'll have to hang my heart up on a stalk green with buds.

There'll be the pain of bending under wind and rain, for sure,

but if I can overcome wisely and sing my hope as a reward,

then with the flowers my little dream will be able to smile brightly too.

가

TEARS OF SHAME

2

Yu Byeong-seok

St. Mary School, High School 2nd year

가

As I am walking home

I find the road overgrown with sharp thorns.

Making a detour, I take

a road without thorns.

가 가

As I am walking home,

I find the road rough with stones.

Making a detour, I take

a road without stones.

As I am walking home

I find the road passes over a high hill.

Making a detour, I take

a road without hills.

가

The journey that should have lasted one day

took me several days

before I arrived.

In those few days

with mother growing much older worrying about
me

and the journey I could not accomplish properly

가

My tears of shame,

hidden under streaming sweat,

dug deeper furrows

in mother's wrinkled brow.

BEAUTIFUL WORLD

3

Yi Ho-gwon

Eunhye School, High School 3rd year

가

This place where I live,
able to smile for others
able to shed tears for others,
is a beautiful world.

가
가

This place where I live,
able to speak for others
able to stay silent for anyone,
is a beautiful world.

가

가

This world where we gather and
become one that I send to you
and you to me
is full of happiness.

가

That place where you live,
able to do things for others,
to stop for others
is a beautiful world.

가
가

That place where you live,
able to fill yourself for others,
to empty yourself for anyone,
is a dazzling world.

가 가

A beautiful world
where we can be 'we'
and can share things together
is our dazzling dream.

YOU, SO LIKE THE SUN

2

Song Tae-ri

St. Mary School, Middle School 2nd year

I'm on my way to school.
Looking into your mirror
that is not my mirror . . .
looking up at the sun, so like you . . .
When you were at my side,
you were just as warm . . .

When it went weeping, veiled in cloud,
if I was there beside you
you used to smile gently
as if to say nothing was the matter,
really, nothing was the matter.
You, so like the sun . . .

When it rains
and I cannot see your beautiful mirror,
I think of your sorrow.
Because of that lack that
I could not sufficiently comfort you for,
you were obliged to go rising above . . .

I wonder what you are thinking about now?
Are you thinking of me?
You were such that you only ever used
to show a smiling face;
I wonder, up there without me,
you're not crying now, are you?

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YOU AND I

Kim Yeong-Nim, No Hyeon-Hui, Im Areum
St Mary School, High School 2nd year

Dearest friend!

We can't see each other with our eyes but
by the sound of my voice you can tell how I'm
feeling

today, how I am today,

more quickly than I can myself.

You only have to hear me speak

and it's always been you who in a flash

recognize when there's thick fog inside my heart
or when it's raining there.

When I got careless walking along a familiar
path,

and hurt myself bumping into something,

it would hurt you more than me

as you rubbed the aching spot.

And at your warm touch

my pain used to melt away in a flash.

When I was curious about the crimson twilight

I've never once seen since the day I was born

you ransacked your memories of

when you were small

and bringing together all the words you knew

busily described the last twilight you saw,

that day's sky.

Dear friend! Thanks to you, I'm able to cherish

in my heart my own unique twilight glow.

If a line remained with me like a draught

of fresh water

after I'd read some poems,

you were always first in my mind,

dear friend.

I longed to share with you the fresh draught

I'd drunk . . .

We've always been close,

since the days we were sniveling babies

until today, weeping and laughing together,

although there were lots of times

we hurt one another too . . .

and now I've glimpsed God in you

so of course I can't be indifferent to you.

We two, God's images,
will be each other's light in the future too,
so off we go toward tomorrow!

I'D LOVE TO BE LIKE THE SKY

2

Im Seon-ha

Eunhye School, High School 2nd year

가

I'd love to be like the sky.

A clear autumn sky

with swarms of dragonflies

rising dizzily –

가

I'd love to be a pure sky.

Though sometimes a warm spring breeze blows
and trembling hearts flutter

and at other times with roars like thunder
constricted hearts are refreshed

and there may be moments of cool tears
like showers on heavy, still summer days

가

though the world is pitch black and dark,
the moment a rainbow appears
it brings a smile to people's faces—
that's the kind of sky I'd love to be like.

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A Little Bird Longing for the Sky

Kim Pil-Woo
(Sacred Heart Orphanage for the Blind)

They are gradually moving farther away.

My loving family's faces slowly
sink into memories.

The faces of the friends who stayed beside me
patting my back when things were too hard
are little by little passing into remembrance.

The woods lovely as paintings, the quiet streams,
all that beauty is slowly darkening.

The faces of those who love me
those I love
are bit by bit growing hazy now.

All the things I love so much
are all the time, all the time
being buried deeper in the dark.

But still,

the affectionate voices of my family who first
were treasure-like there sustaining me
resonate gently more and more
in my ears.

I am able to feel
deep in my heart bright vibrations
of encouragement from my treasure-like friends
who have always given me strength.
The light, graceful songs of birds
flutter beautiful near my ears
while I can sense
the breathing of all the trees, plants and flowers.
Instead of the sparkle of flowing rivers
I can feel the flow of lovely nature,
can enjoy the world's sounds
borne far and wide on the wings of the wind.
Instead of the beloved sight of the people I love
I find I can feel
the warmth of the love they truly bear me.

As my eyesight grew ever less
I thought that slowly the doors
opening onto the world were shutting too.
I thought that when the light finally vanished
the doors onto the world would be tightly shut.
I was like a helpless little bird
caught in a cage
longing dazedly for the sky,
even forgetting it was able to fly.

That little bird
that once felt it could never again fly up to the
blue sky
even if the doors were opened
is now attempting little wing-beats.
The little bird that had never once flown through
the wide-reaching sky falls repeatedly to the
ground,
flies, grows weary, rests, flies on,
strives to go flying toward that unknown world
with ever more powerful wing-beats.
The little bird that once longed for the sky
now tries to go flying toward that longing.

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Following Someone Else

by Kwon Yu-Jin (1st year High school, Songshim School for the Blind)

Someone is walking along the road.
Another goes walking after.

Someone is climbing a mountain.
Another follows without a word.

Someone is passing through a forest.
Another still keeps close behind.

When the sun shines bright,
for fear that someone might be veiled
that person quietly draws back.

When darkness comes gently visiting,
for fear that someone might be afraid of the dark
that person lightly stands tall:

a person who diminishes mutely
despite waking in bright sunlight, the brighter it
gets

a person who ever rises with a little light
though seeming to be driven away in night's
darkness,

a person who ever simply stays silent
and keeps following quietly behind,

a person who makes someone else shine bright
rather than shining bright,

a person who safeguards without anyone
realizing
though known always to be there.

Even if I cannot put on much of a show,

I long to become such a person—one who
knows
how to watch someone else's back.

The Sea

1

by Yi Yon-seung (1st year Middle school,
Songshim School for the Blind)

Watching blue waves lapping
I send flowing off with the sea
all my no-good things
my sad things
my mistaken things
feeling that they may then be forgotten.

Listening to the sound of the sea's cool waves
I softly tell everything to that roar
the troubles I could not tell
the secrets I cannot tell
feeling that they may all be heard.

If I softly speak my heart's cares
to the sea's blue waves lapping
the cool sound of waves
feeling that it will hear then erase them all,
I send them off with the sea.